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General Assembly

Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

39th plenary meeting
Thursday, 21 October 2004, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 56 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(a) Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

(b) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.1)

(c) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of South-East Asian Nations

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.6)

(d) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

(e) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

(f) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

(g) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

(h) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.3)

(i) Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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(j) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.5)

(k) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

(l) Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

(m) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Note by the Secretary-General (A/59/297)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.8)

(n) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

(o) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

(p) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.12)

(q) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.11)

(r) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

Note by the Secretary-General (A/59/296)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.7)

(s) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303)

(t) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries

Mr. Tjitendero (Namibia): This being my first statement to the General Assembly at this session, let me take this rare opportunity to personally congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the Assembly.

The consolidated report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303) before us points to the comprehensive nature of the activities of the United Nations in the areas of peace and development, as well as to the importance of information-sharing and experience-sharing among regional organizations.

The cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union (AU) is something that we in Africa value greatly. United Nations assistance to the AU during its transition from the Organization of African Unity has been of great importance. In that context, we welcome the increased interaction between the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa with the AU Commission. As Africa continues to implement the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which is a partnership with the rest of the world, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa is well placed to advocate progress on the implementation and mobilization of support for NEPAD through the United Nations system. Now that the Commission of the African Union is fully functional, we believe that the assistance rendered during the transition should be translated into concrete programmes of cooperation. In that regard, we applaud the concrete steps taken by the World Food Programme (WFP) to enhance cooperation with the African Union, and we call for support in the four key priority areas jointly agreed upon with the African Union.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of peace and security, and

particularly in peacekeeping missions and in brokering peace, is enhancing security in Africa. But it must be stressed that peacekeeping operations must go hand in hand with humanitarian efforts. That is true not only for the conflict situation in Darfur but for other conflict situations as well. When the international community is reluctant to respond generously to humanitarian appeals for Africa's conflict and emergency situations, it regrettably sets back peace efforts and further aggravates those situations. Therefore, it is important that cooperation be deepened between the Security Council and the African Union's Peace and Security Council, as well as between the United Nations system as a whole and the African Union Commission.

I wish to point out that the challenges and the level of experience of regional organizations varies from region to region. That sharing of information and experience will save scarce resources, prevent us from reinventing the wheel and enable us to adapt success stories to regional circumstances. In that respect, the quarterly magazine, *Africa Renewal*, continues to be an effective source of information. It not only disseminates information on developments in Africa to the world but also enables the five subregions of Africa to remain informed on developments in their own region and on the continent as a whole.

Mr. Dauth (Australia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

I shall say a few words on the Southern African Development Community. In this regard, we associate ourselves with the comments made by the representative of the Republic of Botswana, who spoke on behalf of all of us.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has long-standing relations with the United Nations that go back as far as the struggle for decolonization in Southern Africa. SADC, as a community, continues to contribute to the realization of the purposes and principles of the United Nations and thus benefits immensely from this comity of nations. SADC has therefore requested the Secretary-General to grant it accreditation as an observer to the General Assembly. We are confident that we can count on the support of all, in particular the regional organizations represented in the Assembly.

In March this year, SADC Heads of State and Government adopted its regional indicative strategic development plan. In formulating that plan, SADC took into account the ongoing transformation of the African Union and the launching of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). At the global level, economic challenges facing SADC include the process and the effects of globalization, which encompass, among other things, financial, trade and technological constraints. Thus, the regional indicative strategic development plan is aligned with the Millennium Development Goals. SADC continues to cooperate with the United Nations system through various programmes in areas such as peace and security, health, education, the environment and sustainable resource management and trade. We appreciate the support of the United Nations system and call for increased resources for the Economic Commission for Africa.

The adverse climatic conditions of Southern Africa result in recurring droughts and floods, leading to emergency situations including food shortages. In that context, we welcome the establishment of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Regional Support Office for Southern Africa and the Regional Inter-Agency Support Coordination Office, which is proving to be effective in delivering and coordinating humanitarian assistance. Let me emphasize that the OCHA regional office can only coordinate delivery. Assistance to complement the efforts of SADC must come from the international community at large.

As the item under discussion is cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, I would be remiss if I did not express my delegation's thanks and appreciation to the European Union and other development partners, which continue to assist the development efforts of SADC countries in our region.

This brings me to a topic that is very close to my heart and for which I have worked for a number of years since the independence of Namibia, namely, the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has always advocated a strong and effective multilateral system with the United Nations at its centre. After all, IPU is comprised of parliamentarians from Member States of our Organization, the United Nations.

Following Namibia's birth in 1990, IPU was one of the first international organizations my country joined. For the past 14 years, Namibia has been a loyal member of IPU and has been privileged to witness the

exciting developments of the organization, particularly in the area of reform and, more importantly, its cooperation with the United Nations. As we all know, the Union, founded in 1889, is an international organization under which the world's parliaments assemble.

The topic of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union is indeed very much in order, given the fact that, while the United Nations represents, for the most part, the executive arm of Member States, IPU represents the legislative arm of Member States. It is therefore critical that we applaud the observer status that the United Nations has accorded IPU and the continued effort aimed at improving the relationship between the two organizations.

Over the past years, member parliaments of IPU have asserted that it is important to approach solutions to global conflicts in a multidimensional manner to support and strengthen the United Nations system. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations (A/59/303), IPU has been addressing issues similar to those concerning the United Nations. Parliamentarians of the world, through IPU, have had to deal with issues of conflict, as witnessed in Iraq, the Great Lakes region of Africa, the Middle East and other hot spots in the world. In its different forums, IPU has addressed issues relating to trade and development, information society, terrorism and the protection and the promotion of human rights throughout the world. We look forward to the recommendations of the High-level Panel to be issued later this year. Furthermore, as we move towards the mid-term review of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, IPU, through the second Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of Parliament, will pronounce itself on that very important development issue.

In conclusion, we support the conclusions of Secretary-General's report relating to this question.

Mr. Bieri (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The importance of cooperation between the United Nations and the other international organizations hardly needs to be stressed. The aim is to achieve a better distribution of tasks between the United Nations, which is the most important organization of a universal nature, and regional and sectoral organizations, which have the goal of finding the best possible solutions to particular problems of our time.

The pre-eminent role played by the United Nations in peacekeeping and in authorizing the use of force is, for us, a fundamental principle. Apart from cases of legitimate defence, force may be used only with the approval of the Security Council.

Our conception of the nature of relations between the United Nations and regional organizations is based on another principle — that of subsidiarity. With its 26 cantons and 2,800 communes, Switzerland puts the principle of task-sharing into practice on a daily basis. Thus we enable actors on the ground to formulate and then to implement — in cooperation with higher authorities — solutions that best respond to the needs of the local population.

There can be no doubt that major contemporary challenges in the fields of security, sustainable development in all its aspects and respect for human rights need to be discussed at the international level within the institutions of the United Nations. Nevertheless, regional and sectoral organizations have an essential role to play in the search for solutions that are appropriate to specific regional, social or cultural contexts and to the implementation of such solutions. In our view, organizations with a parliamentary dimension, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union at the global level and the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) at the regional level, have a special role to play in this context.

Swiss institutions have traditionally taken an open approach to civil society as a whole. Elected representatives, in particular members of parliament, play a key role in conveying the aspirations and the concerns of civil society. We are therefore particularly interested in the recent proposals to make the United Nations more open to national parliaments and hence to new partners from civil society, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. We also noted with great interest the recommendations of the recent Cardoso report, which advocates, in particular, improved participation by national parliaments in the work of the United Nations. It is essential that the voice of the people be heard, and historical experience has shown that it is parliaments that are best able to articulate the aspirations of peoples to live together in peace, with respect for their identity.

The Council of Europe is an example of a regional organization that, thanks to a strong network

of conventions, is able to ensure an increasingly close union among its members. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the OSCE has been working hard to bring a new era of democracy, peace and unity to the European continent.

Since Switzerland became a full member of the United Nations as a result of an initiative and a decision by the Swiss people, the federal parliament has shown great interest in the activities of the United Nations. My country's Government has been keeping parliament informed and consulting with it on the positions that it takes in the United Nations. It encourages parliamentarians to participate in General Assembly debates, which is why I have the honour of addressing the Assembly now, as chairman of the Swiss delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and as a member of the official Swiss delegation.

The opportunities for cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU — the "parliament of parliaments" — are enormous, and deserve to be developed. The text of the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU, which will be submitted to the General Assembly, lays the foundation for strengthening cooperation between the two organizations and underscores the increasing parliamentary contribution and support that the IPU can bring to the United Nations.

The decision to hold, in September 2005, a second conference of speakers of national parliaments, is an important symbol of this cooperation. It will be a joint United Nations-IPU meeting to consider possible ways of strengthening the parliamentary dimension of international cooperation in the fields of peace and security, economic and social development, international law, human rights, democracy and gender equality.

That is a specific example of collaboration between the United Nations and the IPU, aimed at enabling us to find global solutions to the problems confronting us at the beginning of the twenty-first century — problems such as war, hunger, disease, unemployment and the inequitable distribution of wealth and of knowledge. My country, Switzerland, is, of course, prepared to play its part in resolving those enormous problems.

Mr. Løvald (Norway): Norway, as a founding member of the Council of Europe, has always given that organization high priority. During our current chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, we have worked to further enhance and strengthen the cooperation between the Council of Europe and other organizations. It is in that spirit that we welcome this opportunity to review the status of the cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations. We welcome the report prepared by the Secretary-General. It serves as a useful basis for discussions on the development of relations between the two organizations.

The Council of Europe has been implementing, in Europe, the ideas and principles of the United Nations. European instruments and mechanisms work to secure the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law for more than 800 million people. Those shared ideas and principles have been applied through close cooperation between the Council of Europe and United Nations organizations such as Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organization.

We welcome the further development of cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations family. In an increasingly interdependent world, the international political agenda is dominated by the threat of terrorism. The Council of Europe and the United Nations share the view that the global threat of terrorism must be met with a global response. Security Council resolution 1566 (2004) is an important step towards further consolidating international efforts against terrorism. The Council of Europe believes that any response to terrorism should be in accordance with the values of democracy and the rule of law. We believe the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on Terrorism will become an ever-more important partner for the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee in the global fight against terrorism.

The Council of Europe is committed to promoting intercultural dialogue. Only through dialogue can we promote human rights, tolerance, good governance and economic development and thereby promote stability and secure prosperity. Through increased cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, we can improve the interaction between various partners to build democratic societies based on the rule of law. The Council of Europe, the United Nations and the

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe have, since 1994, met annually in a high-level tripartite meeting. Several other organizations and institutions have, over the years, contributed to that meeting. We look forward to further developing the annual meeting as an arena for dialogue.

We note that, in his opening statement to the General Assembly at this session, the Secretary-General stressed the importance of rule of law nationally, as well as internationally. His perspective provides us with a good basis for exploring possibilities to further enhance the cooperation between our two organizations.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize once again the close and comprehensive cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations. The Norwegian chairmanship looks forward to this opportunity to further develop these relations.

Mr. Atkinson (United Kingdom): I would like to start by thanking the representative of Norway, who has just spoken on behalf of the member States of the Council of Europe, and to fully endorse that statement.

I would like to speak specifically about relations between the United Nations and the Council of Europe as an example of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

The United Kingdom is pleased that this year's draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe recognizes the important role the Council of Europe plays in promoting and protecting human rights, the rule of law and pluralist democracy throughout Europe, thereby helping to pursue the aims and ideals of the United Nations.

I was particularly pleased to see that the draft resolution also notes the constructive interest shown by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in the reform of the United Nations. I say this because I have the honour to be a member of the Parliamentary Assembly and of its Political Affairs Committee, which produced a report earlier this year entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations".

That report encourages the United Nations to make full use of the expertise of regional organizations such as the Council of Europe in addressing global threats and in implementing the various programmes and activities of the United Nations. The experience of the Council of Europe in specific areas such as developing democratic security and stability, its activities in the promotion and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, confidence-building measures, the protection of national minorities, promoting equal opportunities between women and men and the fight against racism can only strengthen and complement the work of the United Nations as it seeks to respond to the new global threats of the twenty-first century.

The report also calls for the introduction of a parliamentary dimension to the work of the General Assembly. The long experience of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe reinforces the message that elected members of national parliaments can come forward with solutions to problems that Governments — and the United Nations itself — may have difficulty solving. Where intergovernmental activity and diplomacy have failed at the top, conversations between parliamentarians can start initiatives that can succeed at the bottom.

Relations between the Council of Europe and the United Nations go back over 50 years, and our cooperation continues to improve. This cooperation takes many forms, including meetings between bodies of our two organizations. An example of that was a meeting in Paris last February between a Parliamentary Assembly delegation and members of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. This exchange of views proved beneficial for both sides, as it highlighted the role that regional organizations such as ours could play — not as autonomous players, but in cooperation with the United Nations in responding to global threats and challenges.

Kosovo provides other examples of cooperation as once again, at the request of United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe will be mounting an election observation mission for the forthcoming elections to the Kosovo Assembly. UNMIK has also recently signed two agreements that will pave the way for two Council of Europe human rights conventions to be applied to Kosovo. These are the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

As UNMIK's recent signing of the two Council of Europe agreements illustrates, the Council of Europe's principal contribution to human rights is its legal instruments. The most well known is, of course, the European Convention on Human Rights, which built upon the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is another legally binding instrument based on principles established in United Nations texts.

I should also highlight the Tripartite High-Level Meeting held in Vienna in February this year between representatives of the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the OSCE. That meeting discussed how to respond to threats to security and stability in the twenty-first century and how to improve cooperation. The participants agreed to step up the fight against racism, xenophobia, all forms of religious intolerance and discrimination. They also highlighted the Council of Europe's conventions and monitoring mechanisms in this field and urged closer cooperation between partner organizations.

Participants at the meeting also underlined the need for a common and effective framework to combat acts of terrorism, which gravely impact on the enjoyment of human rights, in particular the right to life, and stressed the need to respect human rights under international law. In that regard, they welcomed the Council of Europe's Guidelines on Human Rights and the Fight against Terrorism and the work currently under way.

We in Europe do not forget that we too have experienced our 9/11s, most recently on 3/11 this year in Madrid, 8/24 in the air over Russia, followed by 9/3 at Beslan. Which of our Member States here will be next? To win this war requires the support of every member of the United Nations.

The Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on Terrorism recently concluded that the Council of Europe could bring further added value to the fight against terrorism through focused and specifically targeted instruments dealing with the prevention of terrorism and covering existing gaps in international law on action against terrorism.

The international legal framework aimed at combating terrorism is already extensive, and the highest priority should be given to obtaining the widest possible ratification and implementation of existing agreements. The United Kingdom remains of the view that the most valuable additional legal instrument would be a United Nations comprehensive convention on terrorism.

These are just a few of the areas of cooperation that exist between our two organizations. I am sure that the good relations that exist will continue and will improve in the coming years. The Council of Europe puts much emphasis on improving synergies between international organizations and reducing any duplication that may exist. That is why cooperation with international organizations will be on the agenda for the third Council of Europe Summit, which will be hosted by Poland next year.

In conclusion, the Council of Europe looks to the United Nations to take the lead on global conflict prevention and human rights issues. In turn, the Council of Europe, as the only truly pan-European organization, can enhance the ideals laid down by the Charter of the United Nations and make important contributions in advancing the universal goals and values of the United Nations throughout Europe.

I reiterate on behalf of the United Kingdom the need for cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations to continue and improve where possible, and for the United Nations to make full use of the expertise of regional organizations, such as the Council of Europe, in addressing global threats and in making the United Nations a more effective organization.

Mr. Diarra (Mali) (*spoke in French*): My delegation also associates itself with the statement made by the delegation of Nigeria on behalf of the African Union. Allow me to express the great appreciation of my delegation for the high quality of the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations (A/59/303) now under consideration.

My delegation's observations will be primarily focused on cooperation with the African Union, with the Organization of the Islamic Conference and, finally, on the relationship between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie.

At the outset, my delegation welcomes the existence of a framework for consultation between the United Nations Secretary-General and the heads of regional organizations. The review of that mechanism, planned for 2005, will provide an opportunity to lay down plans for practical follow-up for the future.

The United Nations contribution to establishing the newly created African Union institutions has been concrete and important. The Office of the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Africa has actively participated in formulating the strategic framework of the Union and in mobilizing international efforts for the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The contribution of the Secretary-General's inter-institutional Advisory Panel has also made it possible to strengthen capacities in the area of NEPAD sectoral policies.

The new regional and international context calls for the creation of an African defence and security system and for reorienting the scope and missions of subregional and continental security institutions. We welcome the participation of United Nations experts in establishing the AU Peace and Security Council and in drawing up the Common African Defence and Security Policy. The strengthening of the capacity of the Peace and Security Council to act promptly and to coordinate its actions requires a sustained United Nations effort to promote the implementation of the early warning system, the creation of an African standby force and the drawing up of a memorandum of understanding on relations between the African Union and subregional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution.

The spread of small arms and light weapons is a major source of concern in terms of security on the continent. The assistance provided by the United Nations Development Programme, through its Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development, for the implementation of the Economic Community of West African States Moratorium on Small Arms and Light Weapons should be strengthened and expanded to other subregions of the continent.

The adoption of the African Union's Plan of Action for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and the establishment of the African Centre for Study and Research on Terrorism, inaugurated in October 2004 in Algeria, are Africa's most recent responses to the threat of international terrorism. To succeed, these initiatives require the support and the technical and financial assistance of the United Nations system. Moreover, conflict situations in Africa are characterized by the forced recruitment of children under the age of 18. The United Nations and the African Union must work to pool their actions in managing this situation.

The report under consideration highlights the cooperation now existing between the United Nations system and the AU in peacekeeping efforts. Regarding the specific situation in Somalia, the establishment of a transitional parliament and the election of Mr. Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed as President of the Republic of Somalia opens the way to the restoration of peace and security in that country. United Nations support in the consolidation of that process is urgently needed.

More generally speaking, we encourage the United Nations to conclude arrangements with the African Union and subregional organizations, to involve them in planning and strategic management for United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa.

Furthermore, my delegation welcomes the contribution of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights towards strengthening capacity in the area of human rights, particularly the rights of women and children, including by providing assistance for the establishment of an African human rights documentation centre.

Support of the United Nations system to Africa in the areas of humanitarian assistance, the management of natural disasters, food security and the dissemination of information is essential to alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable population groups. We hail the opening in Addis Ababa of a World Food Programme liaison office to the African Union.

My delegation takes note of the constructive cooperation existing between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference on political, economic, social and humanitarian issues. In particular, we believe that the two organizations should shoulder primary responsibility for assisting the Palestinian people in its legitimate quest to recover its inalienable right to self-determination and to the creation of an independent State. To that end, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights must be supported and strengthened.

The record of cooperation between the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF) and the United Nations over the period under consideration is instructive. Whether it be in the area of early warning, conflict prevention and management, supervision of elections, strengthening capacity for international negotiations, advancement of gender issues or the creation of education-for-all programmes,

the OIF has proved itself to be a dynamic organization. The OIF contribution to a successful first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Geneva, augurs well for the success of the second phase, planned for Tunis in November 2005. The OIF is making a significant contribution to strengthening multilingualism in the United Nations system. That is a noble effort, and it deserves to be supported.

Mr. Vila Coma (Andorra) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour of speaking under agenda item 56 (j), on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), as discussed in Part Five of the Secretary-General's report (A/59/303) before us today. In that connection, allow me to underscore the interest shown in a May 2004 letter from our Minister for Foreign Affairs addressed to the Secretary-General (A/59/97, annex). In that letter, he stated the position of the Government of Andorra.

Andorra fully supports the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. My country's support is manifested also in the backing our parliamentary delegation has given to the IPU's recommendations concerning the conclusions of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations, which were discussed at the 110th Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, held in Mexico from 15 to 23 April 2004.

Andorra also supports the consultations devoted to defining a common conception of how to bring a parliamentary dimension into the work of the United Nations. We also welcome the significant increase in the contribution made by parliaments when dealing with various United Nations subjects.

We should like to stress four points in particular. First, the developing cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the realm of education seems to us ever more relevant.

Secondly, in the realm of peace and security, I should like to highlight the superb teamwork between the IPU and the United Nations system in fighting terrorism.

Thirdly, in the realm of social development, I want to hail the cooperation between the IPU and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, with a view to ensuring more in-depth consideration of gender-specific issues.

Finally, as regards sustainable development, the full panoply of cooperation and joint work done by the United Nations and the IPU is helpful not only in analysing how far we have come towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals, but also in preparing for the second World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, scheduled for September 2005 in New York.

The Andorran Government welcomes the role played by the IPU in all these realms and is happy to make its contribution to development assistance; next year we will reach the goal set three years ago of expanding that assistance.

In conclusion, I should like to stress the Andorran Government's support for cooperation between Governments and parliaments in the international setting of the United Nations. Andorra has always joined in sponsoring a variety of draft resolutions and will continue to do so in pursuit of the goal of actively supporting such cooperation. We should like to pay tribute to the Chilean delegation for its coordination on this item.

Mr. Severin (Romania): Today we are addressing one of the main issues in the contemporary debate on international relations. Cooperation with regional organizations is a key issue for the United Nations with regard to maintaining world peace and security, ensuring opportunities for development and tackling the new threats and challenges to our society. With the support of regional organizations, the United Nations can build a more stable foundation for peace and a better life in all regions of the world. The synergetic partnership of the United Nations with regional organizations invites optimal use of resources and capabilities.

The world is not yet a truly global place; or, better put, the world is global but is not, and will not be, homogeneous. The world is truly global to the extent that the most important phenomena, processes and trends are interlinked, and major events are echoed and have repercussions far from where they take place. The world is also global because ideas and information circulate freely, thereby making people aware of one another and, eventually, dependent on one another.

On the other hand, the sources of danger, the opportunities and the challenges are local, as are the cultural, familial and societal background against which one reacts to, and copes with, those dangers, opportunities and challenges. The conjunction of these

facts and factors provides global relevance to local realities. The enhancement of political power and the rationale behind it might be global, but the resources that are the basis of any power are local. Therefore, ultimately, any political action is local. In fact, any global action is a local action with a universal impact. Globalization therefore imposes local empowerment, regional integration, inter-regional cooperation and, more generally, subsidiarity.

Against that backdrop, regional organizations have certain unique advantages — faster deployment capabilities, better use of resources, closer knowledge of political realities on the ground, among others — that make them the United Nations partners of choice in dealing with the whole spectrum of objectives on today's international agenda. That point is central to Romania's vision of the reform of the United Nations and of international relations. Recently, in July 2004, Romania organized a Security Council debate on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in stabilization processes (see S/PV.5007). That was not a one-time event, but will be followed up as a dominant theme of Romania's elected mandate in the Security Council.

Recent remarkable examples of good cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations include the European Union peace enforcement mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, NATO's taking over command of the International Security Assistance Force and the field activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union in South-Eastern Europe and the southern Caucasus. Those examples illustrate the numerous advantages of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, as well as the wide variety of possible inter-institutional arrangements. I would also like to point out the cooperation that exists between the United Nations and the Council of Europe, as I also hold the chairmanship of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly Subcommittee on External Relations.

Those two organizations have worked closely on several missions and in many international conferences. I would mention just a few by citing the cooperation measures with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, most notably in the areas of human rights, legal reform, education and culture; the cooperation between the Council of Europe and the former United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina on legal and human rights programmes, the implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights and the reform of prisons and detention institutions; and the increased mutual contribution to international efforts against terrorism.

On the recommendation of its Parliamentary Assembly, the Council of Europe is currently intensifying its relationship with the United Nations. The members of the Subcommittee on External Relations are all here in New York to exchange views with United Nations officials on common issues of concern and on how to reinforce cooperation between our organizations. The Council of Europe has built up broad experience on key issues on the global agenda. Within the United Nations, we are committed draw the best possible value from that experience and to be an active part of the United Nations and the adaptation of the international framework to today's new realities.

It is obvious that the United Nations and the Council of Europe have common goals and many similar visions, but different means. They could therefore develop their respective effectiveness through synergy. Among many other things, the United Nations could make use of the Council of Europe's concept of democratic security, its unique mechanism of transnational parliamentary monitoring and its experience in transnational enhancement of the rule of law and human rights through the European Court of Human Rights and recognizing an individual's right to have recourse to it. It could also make use of the Council of Europe's practices concerning the development of local self-government on the basis of the ideas of decentralization, devolution and subsidiarity and on structured dialogue and cooperation among local communities within the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

While the need for enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is widely recognized and welcomed, the best way to achieve that is still under consideration. Romania trusts that this topic will feature prominently in the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. In that context, I should also mention the importance of the hearings organized this year in Paris by the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly General Committee on Political Affairs and Security with the members of the High-level Panel. We hope that the conclusions of those debates will be reflected in the final document of the Panel.

Similarly, I should mention that, from a cooperative perspective, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has adopted a number of resolutions and recommendations on the subject of strengthening the United Nations. We believe that it would be fair and wholly justified for similar ideas coming from regional organizations such as ours to be taken into consideration by the United Nations and that relevant United Nations documents make explicit reference to those contributions.

As we search for best modes of cooperation we must keep in mind that the differing characteristics of regional organizations in terms of membership, resource availability and institutional capacity, as well as the uniqueness of each particular situation, defy the construction of a universal model of cooperation. Nevertheless, as we have heard today, some general principles should guide cooperative processes, namely, the primacy of Chapter VIII of the Charter and of the role of the United Nations and the Security Council in preserving international peace and security. Likewise, one should accept as universal the principle that measures to increase security and protect stability must not be taken at the expense of respect for human rights and individual freedoms.

If our discussions today are to serve a meaningful purpose, cooperation should be based on the comparative advantages of the United Nations and of regional organizations. Those comparative advantages should also determine the most appropriate organization to be used in a given conflict situation. For that reason, cooperation must be an ongoing process culminating in the evaluation of lessons learned and best practices. We therefore regret the fact that General Assembly resolutions on cooperation with regional organizations still lack substance, vision and a pragmatic approach. We are thinking in particular of documents referring to United Nations relations with the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the European Union. We recognize that the system of fundamental values promoted by those European organizations — especially by the Council of Europe — is not shared by all United Nations Member States. We should also admit that — apart from the basic rights and freedoms which are universal — there exists a kind of democratic variability that reflects different cultural backgrounds.

However, the goal of the United Nations should be to develop respect for diversity in such a way as to make universal values more vibrant, and not more irrelevant. We therefore believe that United Nations documents should highlight the virtues of the values defined and developed within various regional organizations such as the European ones I have just mentioned. At the same time, United Nations documents should lead to the establishment of appropriate forums in which regional organizations could present, explain and defend their specific values. Reinforcing cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations also requires innovative and pragmatic efforts to pool together all the resources available to make optimal and rational use of those resources in any given situation. There is, however, a greater need to develop the capacity of regional organizations to make full use of their potential assets.

We can thus identify the most relevant issues for the debate on how to increase cooperation and, where needed, coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations: subsidiarity, comparative advantages, funding, mechanisms of effective coordination and linkage, communication and exchange of information, regional capacity-building, oversight and feedback. A benchmark for such increased cooperation would be to make progress in conflict prevention, in the management of post-conflict situations and in advancing the settlement of so-called frozen crises.

In that connection, there are several frozen conflicts in the Euro-Atlantic area, in Nagorny Karabakh, Transdniestria and South Ossetia, among others. These crises clearly need the regional organizations to enhance their approaches, under the general oversight of the United Nations and the Security Council.

There is growing cooperation among regional organizations themselves, as witnessed by partnership agreements for logistical and military support. A praiseworthy illustration of effective multilateralism at work is the trilateral cooperation that is developing among the African Union, the European Union and the United Nations, which is aimed at alleviating the suffering of the over 2 million people who are in need as a result of the Darfur crisis.

As the world body responsible for international peace and security, the Security Council has a clear role to play in assisting capacity-building and funding for the regional organizations that need it. The Council

might thus consider appealing for more energetic support from the international donor community for regional peace and security initiatives.

Finally, I would like to stress the importance of involving inter-parliamentary regional assemblies, such as the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, in the cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. Generally speaking, the development of a parliamentary dimension within the United Nations is very much needed. As part of such a project, I would suggest that the United Nations establish advisory councils for regional inter-parliamentary assemblies and for elected local and regional authorities. In that respect, I would like to express support for the proposal included in the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations (A/58/817 and Corr.1) concerning the establishment by the Secretary-General of an elected representatives liaison unit, which, among other missions, should have the capacity to organize communication with — and integrate the contributions of — regional inter-parliamentary assemblies.

Before ending, I would like to comment on the stability and democratization of my own country and, indeed, of Eastern and Central Europe in general, which are largely due to the dynamics of regional integration. Support from the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and Romania's emulation of governance patterns in countries members of those organizations has strengthened our advance towards democracy and the rule of law. Not only were we recipients of multilateral expertise in the field of economic development and regional peace and stability, but we ourselves gradually became promoters of cooperative frameworks and initiatives aimed at enhancing regional cohesiveness in addressing the security climate in the Balkans.

Given our membership in — and 2001 chairmanship of — the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, our current membership in the South-East European Cooperation Process and our bid for European Union membership, Romania rightly values regional undertakings and can contribute to identifying within the United Nations the most adequate means to foster cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in peace and security and development activities. The stakes are very high. We must reach the kind of cooperation between our universal Organization and our regional undertakings that will enable us to address every issue, to respond to every crisis and to end any conflict.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): Before delving into the heart of the matter, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the exhaustive report he has made available to us (A/59/303), which will be the essential underpinning for our discussions of agenda item 56, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations".

We would have liked to speak of all the themes that make up this agenda item, as they all seem important to us. Obvious time constraints, however, compel us to be selective and thus to confine our statement to cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union (AU), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF).

Given its geographical size, the AU is the broadest of regional political organizations. Its impact on the way in which world affairs are addressed is therefore far from negligible; I would venture say it is decisive. In fact, over the years, the former Organization of African Unity, which has since become the AU, has proven an aptitude and capacity for contributing to peacekeeping and the settlement of conflicts. The latest of these initiatives was the dispatching of African troops to Darfur. Strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the AU could thus only serve the cause of peace, as, through the logistical and financial assistance the United Nations could provide, it would enhance Africa's potential for becoming involved in shouldering its international responsibilities.

In other areas, such as the economic, social, humanitarian and cultural spheres, this cooperation, which remains limited, should also be stepped up. It is to the credit of the United Nations that it has already taken on board the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the programme to fight HIV/AIDS while waiting for the 2005 summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to definitively specify its level of commitment in fighting poverty.

In recent years, we have seen a strengthening of the ties between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. There is no need to dwell on all that has been undertaken, but I cannot fail to mention the historic Millennium Summit, held here in 2000, which began to draw the United Nations and the IPU

closer together and which led to the IPU being granted observer status.

What parliaments can contribute to the United Nations therefore seems to no longer be a question. Indeed, through their decisive involvement in the current vital issues facing humankind — the quest for peace, cooperation for development and fighting poverty, among others — parliaments have shown that they have become indispensable actors in international life, leading some to speak of parliamentary diplomacy.

On 19 and 20 October, a Parliamentary Hearing was held at United Nations Headquarters, with an interactive debate on major issues such as arms control, peacekeeping operations and the role of women, particularly in post-conflict rebuilding. The outcome of the Hearing strongly confirmed that involvement, as did that of the 111th Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, just held in Geneva, which clearly set out the role of parliaments in strengthening multilateral non-proliferation mechanisms, in preserving biodiversity and in the resolute support they must provide to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

My delegation supports the IPU's request for more time to consider the proposals contained in the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations — the Cardoso report. We would also like to congratulate the Permanent Observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and his team for their hard work in advancing the ideals of IPU here in the United Nations.

In a few weeks, Burkina Faso will host the tenth Summit of la Francophonie under the theme of "La Francophonie: a united community that supports sustainable development". That theme is meant to remind the francophone family — and, indeed, all of humanity — that only sustainable, united development of the entire planet constitutes the best response for ensuring international peace and security. The International Organization of la Francophonie thus adopts one of the Millennium Development Goals that is a key objective of the United Nations: to promote sustainable development for our world, which is the only way to discourage conflicts forever and to ensure international peace.

This is not the first example of the commitment of the Organization of la Francophonie to issues at the heart of United Nations concerns. In fact, since its creation the Organization of la Francophonie has undertaken several initiatives in cooperation with the United Nations, all of which have promoted greater rapprochement among peoples and assisted in the daily struggle for the well-being of humanity. One example of such cooperation deserving of encouragement is the Observer Mission of the Organization of la Francophonie to the United Nations, which should be commended for its efforts to further strengthen and give greater importance to those relations.

We must recognize that regional organizations provide an ideal springboard for achieving the goals of the United Nations. In that spirit, my delegation sincerely hopes that the draft resolutions submitted in the context of agenda item 56 to enhance this kind of partnership will be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: I now call upon the representative of Congo to speak on behalf of the Economic Community of Central African States.

Mr. Ikouebe (Congo) (*spoke in French*): It is my honour today to address the General Assembly on item 56 (g), cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), a community that groups the following 11 countries of Central Africa: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Chad and my country, the Congo, which is the current Chair of the subregional organization.

First, let me emphasize the great interest and importance my delegation attaches to this debate on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, which is an expression of the necessary interaction among all entities that must work together to build peace, settle conflicts and promote all aspects of development.

In associating myself with the statement made by Nigeria on behalf of the African Union, I would like to reaffirm our continent's gratitude to the international community, in particular the United Nations system, for the support given to Africa in its efforts for peace, security and development.

Forty-eight hours ago, in this very Hall, we participated in a debate on international support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development, a programme that gives a major role to the African regions, in particular the economic communities. Thus,

I shall speak about one of those communities — the Economic Community of Central African States.

With respect to cooperation between the United Nations and ECCAS, I would first like to thank the Secretary-General for his excellent report on this question (A/59/303) and reaffirm our commitment to strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and our subregional organization, especially at a time when the geopolitical situation is developing in a positive direction in a subregion that only yesterday was considered to be one of the most troubled in Africa.

The multidisciplinary mission that the Secretary-General sent to our region from 8 to 22 June 2003 opened up many perspectives. We await with great interest implementation of the relevant recommendations contained in the report issued following that mission. Last January's ECAAS Summit in Brazzaville focused particularly on those recommendations and entrusted the head of State of the Congo with pursuing steps with the Secretary-General to establish a permanent United Nations office in Central Africa. The office would be a strong political presence, aimed at strengthening that partnership and promoting a comprehensive and integrated approach to the problems of peace, security and development in the subregion. In that context, we welcome the response of the Secretary-General, who has committed himself to undertaking an intensive study to assess thoroughly all aspects of this question.

It was in that spirit that the Brazzaville Summit welcomed the preparations for the international conference on the Great Lakes and expressed its hope that all ECCAS members would be fully involved in it. Today, a few weeks before the convening of the conference in Dar es Salaam on 19 and 20 November, we welcome the fact that all countries neighbouring the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a State strategically located at the heart of the problem area, have been invited to participate fully in that meeting, which should open up new horizons for coexistence and cooperation in that region. We place great hopes in that long-awaited meeting, and we wish to assure the United Nations and the African Union, the co-organizers of the event, of our commitment and that we will make our most positive contribution.

As was underlined in the report of the Secretary-General, and in the light of the conclusions presented by the multidisciplinary mission that I have just mentioned, several areas provide a reference framework for cooperation between the United Nations and ECCAS. I shall cite only a few of urgent concern for our Governments as they seek to strengthen subregional integration and to make existing mechanisms effective.

First, assistance is required to ensure the proper functioning of our system for collective security: the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa and its support organs, the Central African early warning system and the Multinational Force for Central Africa.

We also await assistance in planning and equipment for organizing joint military exercises to carry out a simulation of peacekeeping operations. After the success of the first joint exercise, known as Biyongho 2003, organized at Franceville, Gabon, in the presence of a military adviser of the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations and with the participation of military contingents of the subregion, we plan to repeat that experience in Chad in 2005 and hope for substantial assistance from the international community.

In our efforts to create a free-trade zone, we are counting on the support of the United Nations Development Programme, which could assist us in strengthening the free movement aspect of our project for integration.

In many countries of the subregion, there is a need to implement disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes to consolidate the peace processes under way.

Finally, the battle against poverty, HIV/AIDS and malaria is a priority that gained the attention of the multidisciplinary mission and that should receive increased support of the international community, in particular the United Nations system.

With respect to the aforementioned areas for cooperation, we can conclude that Central Africa expects a great deal from the United Nations, which has already provided it with two instruments necessary for its integration strategy: the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which for us is the appropriate framework for cooperative action, and the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa. We believe that continued support for those two bodies, as well as technical, material and financial assistance to the secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States, will strengthen the partnership between the United Nations and our region.

In conclusion, it is on the basis of the experience gained within the framework of cooperation with the United Nations, and in view of the numerous challenges that remain to be met, that we are submitting a draft resolution designed to strengthen the partnership between the United Nations and our community. We hope that this text will have the backing of all Member States, so that such international consensus can serve to encourage us to move forward and make progress.

Mr. Samy (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations lays the groundwork for cooperation between international and regional organizations in the area of peacekeeping and international security. Experience has shown the need to strengthen such cooperation to include economic and social development in the developing countries.

Here Egypt would like to cite several examples of and frameworks for the importance of dynamic and coordinated interaction between the United Nations and the regional organizations while emphasizing the specific nature and scope of the membership of the United Nations and of regional organizations.

Let me begin with Africa. I cannot overstate the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in strengthening peace, security and stability on the continent. The development of the relationship between the Security Council and regional organizations is of particular importance. It is clear that the peoples and States involved in a given conflict in a particular region are in the best position to have a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the issue. African regional and subregional organizations are therefore likely to come up with important and innovative ideas to find the most appropriate framework for a lasting political settlement.

The most interesting aspect of these developments is the variety of relationships between the United Nations, the African Union and subregional organizations. The African organizations and the United Nations have participated side by side in political mechanisms designed to implement peace agreements in transitional stages. We have also seen the smooth transformation of the peacekeeping forces of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and of the African Union under the umbrella of two United Nations peacekeeping operations — in Côte d'Ivoire and in Burundi.

The African countries have shown a strong sense of responsibility in coping with armed conflicts that have tribal, ethnic or other political aspects within their States. Indeed, the contribution of ECOWAS was important and effective in coping with the emerging conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire at the political and security levels.

The Inter-Government Authority on Development has also played an extremely important role in the peace process in Somalia and in the Sudan, with concrete assistance from the League of Arab States. The African Union has shouldered important responsibilities in peacekeeping in Burundi and is now defining the central role which will be given it in the Sudan, Somalia and elsewhere.

The multidimensional contribution of Africa must take place within the context of a genuine interaction between the Security Council and regional and subregional African organizations, in order further to develop effectively the relationship between the United Nations and those organizations. To enhance the effectiveness of the process, we will be asking the Security Council to tackle conflicts around the world at a subregional level, pinpointing the causes of conflicts while transcending narrow political interests or considerations.

We hope that the United Nations, through its three major bodies, will devise the means to bring about peace and security in Africa on the basis of the International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development for the Great Lakes and by dealing effectively and constructively with the problems in the Sudan and Somalia in East Africa.

In discussing the importance of strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, we must recall the special and historical ties that bind the United Nations and the League of Arab States. The two organizations have all along faced similar historical, economic, political and social challenges. Egypt has coped, and continues to cope, with important international responsibilities in order to strengthen the role of the Arab League and enable it to attain its objectives.

Here we would emphasize the need to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States at all levels, in particular in the political, social and economic areas. The objectives of such strengthened cooperation are the maintenance of

regional and international peace and security; full and lasting respect for the principles of the Charter and of provisions of international law; and support for disarmament efforts, decolonization and the right to self-determination of peoples under foreign occupation, in particular the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State.

Egypt, which has the honour of hosting the League of Arab States, wishes to urge the greatest possible support for the role played by the League of Arab States. There is no doubt that the responsibility of the members of the League and of its secretariat is extremely important, given present circumstances and the serious challenges facing it.

In that respect, Egypt hopes to obtain the support of Member States for the draft resolution that has been submitted on the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States.

Allow me to mention another framework of interaction with the Organization in the context of cooperation between the developing countries and the United Nations — the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO). For nearly five decades now, that organization has been playing a key role in strengthening cooperation between African and Asian countries in the area of international law. Its initiatives have been favourably received at various United Nations conferences, in particular those dealing with treaty rights and the law of the sea. That organization has made a specific contribution to efforts to achieve an international global regime that is based on equality and equity among States.

During its fortieth session in the year 2000, the organization recognized the Bangkok Principles on the status and treatment of refugees. It also defined the shared interests of African and Asian countries on a number of recent relevant issues under consideration by the United Nations and other international organizations with which it has concluded cooperative agreements on various aspects of international law. That has allowed it to make a contribution to the creation of a global legal regime that is equitable and based on the principles of equality and cooperation in international relations.

It should be noted that AALCO has set itself the task of making its expertise available to the States of Asia and Africa and to supply them, on request, advisory services in the area of international law.

We would like to stress Egypt's gratitude to the Secretary-General and to the Secretariat and staff members for their efforts to enable the Organization to fulfil its mission and develop and modernize its methods of work. Egypt would like also to urge members to adopt the draft resolution contained in draft resolution A/59/L.1 on cooperation between the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization and the United Nations.

In conclusion, we wish to emphasize the need for an increased awareness of the fact that there exists a shared set of values and customs that are universally recognized, as expressed in the Charter and in international conventions of the United Nations system. That is why we emphasize the fact that, while it is important to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations at all levels, nevertheless the particular values of each country make it impossible to impose specific regional values on all Members of the United Nations.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/59/303) on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations. In my statement, I will confine myself to a few areas of the report.

My delegation welcomes the strengthened and dynamic cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union (AU) — in particular the AU Peace and Security Council — in various fields. The African Union has established a standby force to deal with conflicts on the continent. More resources, in the form of logistics, will be required to make that force effective, and the United Nations can play a vital role in mobilizing the necessary resources. The AU has assumed ownership of conflict resolution on the continent. However, it should be stressed that the primary responsibility for international peace and security still rests with Security Council. Therefore, the AU's involvement should not mean abdication; there should be complementarities.

The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa should be strengthened by staffing it with highly qualified and experienced people so that it can play an effective role as an advocate for increased assistance to Africa, especially in the economic field. The Office should also help in various capacity-building efforts

undertaken by the African Union. The United Nations has helped to mainstream programmes of the New Partnership for Africa's Development into national poverty reduction strategy papers. My delegation commends the Special Adviser, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, for his tireless efforts in that direction.

The United Nations should also strengthen the role of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Coordinator at the country level by providing his office with adequate financial resources. There should be more coordination and harmonization among the various United Nations agencies represented at the country level, under the overall coordination of the UNDP Resident Coordinator. Civil society actors should also be involved in an advisory capacity in the work of United Nations agencies and of Governments.

The Secretary-General initiated meetings with heads of regional organizations in 1994 to discuss thematic topics such as poverty, organized crime and peace and security. The outcomes of those meetings have contributed to the success of the work of the United Nations in those fields. My delegation commends that initiative and would like it extended to the regional heads of the East African Community. That organization was granted observer status in the General Assembly last year. For the moment, the Community consists of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda; Rwanda and Burundi are about to join. It is pursuing regional integration in all fields — the economic; the political, including the coordination of defence policy; the cultural and others. In such a dynamic institution, the United Nations has a strong and reliable partner with which to attain its goals.

Moreover, the United Nations should enhance its working relationship with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Already, that organization is playing a vital role in the conflict resolution area with regard to the Sudan and Somalia peace talks. We expect a greater United Nations role in post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction, especially in the wake of the recent successful conclusion of the Somalia peace talks in Nairobi. More should be done to expedite the peace talks between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army and Movement. The peace dividend in the southern Sudan will have a welcome ripple effect in Uganda.

My delegation welcomes the cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations. The importance of involving parliamentarians in the work of the United Nations can hardly be overemphasized. Such cooperation was strengthened when IPU was granted observer status by General Assembly resolution 57/32 of 19 November 2002. Parliaments, by internalizing the Millennium Development Goals, can play an important role in their implementation. This would also be true of the outcomes of major United Nations conferences such as the Monterrey Consensus.

Very often, parliamentarians scrutinize international agreements and conventions before they are "domesticated" as municipal laws. It is therefore important to include parliamentarians both in governmental delegations to the General Assembly and in delegations negotiating multilateral treaties. In that way, parliamentarians would be meaningfully involved in the work of the United Nations. My delegation welcomes the annual parliamentary hearings at United Nations Headquarters in New York as yet another useful forum for cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations.

Mr. Sawar (Pakistan): This statement deals with cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). I shall also take this opportunity to speak about future cooperation between the United Nations and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Pakistan has the privilege of being a founding member of all three of those organizations.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference is one of the largest intergovernmental organizations. Its 57 members and three observer States come from Asia, Africa and Europe. As the collective voice of the Muslim world, the OIC has been engaged over the years in a constructive and cooperative relationship with the United Nations, reinforcing common efforts in pursuit of peace and development.

The OIC has endeavoured to promote better understanding and dialogue among various civilizations and cultures. It has undertaken significant measures aimed at fostering peace, promoting social and economic development, combating ethnic or racial intolerance and seeking an end to the causes of

injustice and instability, which are constant threats to world peace and security.

In the aftermath of the tragic events of 11 September 2001, the Islamic world, under the auspices of the OIC, joined the international community in our common fight against international terrorism. The OIC has been emphatic in its condemnation of terrorism; it has adopted a convention aimed at dealing with that scourge. The Convention provides a comprehensive framework for dealing with this problem while upholding the Charter's cardinal principle of self-determination, and acknowledges the legitimacy of freedom struggles against foreign occupation and alien domination.

We are pleased to refer to the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303), which recapitulates the progress achieved during the past year by the United Nations system and the OIC in promoting their shared goals of international peace and security and development. We welcome the effective contacts and consultations that the two organizations have maintained over the past several years.

The two organizations have regularly interacted on a number of political issues, and their mutually supportive role and determination to promote negotiations to resolve conflict continue to receive wide international support. Representatives from the United Nations attended the Tenth Session of the Islamic Summit Conference in Malaysia in 2003 and the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Tehran and Istanbul in 2003 and 2004, respectively. We would like to see the two organizations work more closely in addressing and resolving some of the conflicts in the Muslim world, including Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and Kashmir. More work needs to be done by all concerned to address the root causes of these conflicts and to promote justice and peace.

We are of the view that the two parties should continue to examine ways and means of further expanding and diversifying their cooperation by identifying new areas. We welcome the meeting held in Vienna in July 2004, which identified several proposals for joint projects between the United Nations and the OIC. Cooperation between the two organizations has taken place on numerous occasions in the past, and we would like to encourage the regularization of this trend, with at least one general meeting of representatives of the United Nations Secretariat and the OIC each year. This formal interaction will further enhance cooperation between the two organizations.

Pakistan has the proud privilege of chairing one of the two main committees of the OIC, namely the Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation. The Pakistan-based Committee is responsible for promoting cooperation in the field of science and technology among the Muslim countries. Pakistan is also host to the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is another major regional cooperation organization seeking to promote the socio-economic development of its member States on the basis of their common needs and in keeping with the challenges on the global economic scene. The organization was founded by Pakistan, Iran and Turkey as the successor to the Regional Cooperation for Development organization. In 1992, it was expanded to include Afghanistan and the newly established Central Asian States of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, as well as Azerbaijan.

The ECO has played an important role in strengthening and promoting multidimensional regional economic cooperation among its member countries. It has identified four priority areas for intense regional cooperation, namely, trade, transport, communication and energy. The project-oriented Almaty Outline Plan underscores the importance that ECO member States attach to the development of the transport and communications infrastructure linking the ECO member States with one another and with the outside world. The conclusion of two important agreements — the ECO Transit Trade Agreement and the Transit Transport Framework Agreement — has given further impetus to the expansion of regional trade and economic cooperation.

The ECO region covers territory of more than 7 million square kilometres with a population of nearly 350 million people. The region has immense natural resources, and its members have the political will to tap those resources for the mutual advantage of all. The presidential elections in Afghanistan constitute an important landmark in the peace process and augur well for peace and stability in Afghanistan. Peace and stability in Afghanistan need to be bolstered by socio-economic development and the integration of the Afghan economy with those of its neighbours.

The Economic Cooperation Organization can serve as a vehicle not only for the post-war reconstruction of Afghanistan, but also for the development and integration of the economies of the region, which have borne the brunt of the conflict in Afghanistan.

The ECO already has in place the blueprints for the region-wide development of transport and communications infrastructure, facilities for trade and investment, banking and insurance, culture and education and the effective use of the region's vast energy resources. We expect the United Nations system and the international community to support the efforts of the ECO and its member States in order to realize these blueprints, for the benefit not only of the region but also of the world at large.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), representing the seven countries of South Asia — Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka — was launched in Dhaka in December 1985 at the first-ever Summit Meeting of the South Asian Heads of State or Government. SAARC seeks to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life by accelerating economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region. SAARC also aims at strengthening cooperation with other developing countries and with international and regional organizations with similar aims and objectives.

The highest authority of the Association rests with the SAARC heads of State or Government, who meet annually at the summit level. To date, 12 summits have been held. The twelfth SAARC Summit, held in Islamabad in January 2004, raised hopes and opened up new avenues for regional cooperation among the South Asian countries. SAARC member States are developing modalities for dialogue partnerships with other regions. SAARC countries have also decided to seek observer status in the United Nations.

In conclusion, I would like to express our hope and confidence that United Nations cooperation with both the OIC and the ECO will continue to flourish, to the mutual benefit of the three organizations. We also hope that a new chapter will soon begin in the cooperation between the United Nations and SAARC. Pakistan, as a proud member of the United Nations, the OIC, the ECO and SAARC, will remain actively involved in the work of all four organizations.

Ms. Napoli (Italy) (*spoke in Italian; English text furnished by the delegation*): Allow me, first of all, to reiterate Italy's heartfelt support for the action that the European Union (EU) has been undertaking for some time now to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the national parliaments of Member States, which are brought together in their international assembly, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

In line with the orientations of the EU, Italy devotes great attention to that issue, including at the national level. That is illustrated by the fact that my country has decided to become a sponsor of the draft resolution presented by Chile on the question of cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. The draft constitutes another major step towards more intense cooperation between our two organizations. The foundations of that cooperation were established by the 1996 cooperation agreement and were significantly enhanced by resolution 57/32, of 19 November 2002, whereby the IPU was granted observer status in the work of the General Assembly.

My delegation believes that our common efforts aimed at forging a true, productive partnership between the United Nations and the IPU have produced important results in recent years. However, work needs to be done to ensure that the achievements we have made will provide the basis for further progress. In that regard, I wish to recall the recent adoption by the IPU Executive Committee of a document that identified the priority areas on which to focus cooperation with the United Nations in the next few years. Italian parliamentarians worked hard to achieve that outcome, which will make it possible to better structure the IPU's contribution to the work of the United Nations.

The IPU has an important role to play in ensuring that members of parliaments throughout the world realize the importance of United Nations peacekeeping, as well as the enormous political, logistical and financial challenges peacekeeping entails. Parliamentarians can encourage the Governments of Member States to help the Organization to overcome shortfalls in commitment and equipment, thereby supporting the peace processes in countries where peacekeeping operations have been deployed.

Moreover, I am pleased to note that, in the conclusions contained in his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU, Secretary-General Kofi Annan recognized the role that the IPU

plays in contributing to reaching the main objectives of the international community, and hoped for more systematic involvement on the part of parliamentarians, parliaments and the IPU in the activities of the United Nations. Many of the recommendations contained in the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations — the so-called Cardoso Panel — took that same approach.

On that last point, it is nonetheless important to specify clearly that the establishment of inter-parliamentary mechanisms and structures in the framework of an inter-governmental organization such as the United Nations must include strict respect for the principles of independence and separation of powers, and that it is necessary to avoid useless duplication of mechanisms that already exist in the IPU framework. Those features of the Cardoso Panel's recommendations were the subject of talks between the IPU President, Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Fernando Cardoso, Chairman of the Panel of Eminent Persons. Consultations in that regard are under way with the presidents of various national parliaments. The President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, The Honourable Pier Ferdinando Casini, has already participated in those meetings. He has, moreover, pointed out that if we want public opinion to understand the United Nations, parliaments are, and remain, an irreplaceable filter, and the IPU can play a great role to that end.

My delegation believes that the second Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, which will take place in September 2005, represents the most suitable forum to convey to the United Nations the assessments of the world parliamentary community on such issues.

It is the firm conviction of my delegation that we must maintain our commitment to further strengthening the parliamentary dimension of international cooperation and the involvement of parliamentarians in the activities of the United Nations. We believe that because that dimension, by virtue of the natural role of parliamentarians as a *trait d'union* between civil society and national Governments, can provide precious added value to efforts aimed at attaining the objectives of the United Nations with regard to the great issues of peace and security, economic and social development, international law and human rights, and democracy and equal opportunity. The Italian Parliament and its members are ready, together with all their colleagues in the IPU, to meet that challenge with enthusiasm, as is undoubtedly the United Nations.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): As a host country to the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, Austria has always worked for closer inter-organizational dialogue, especially on the policy-making level. It has also been our policy to promote cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the field of peacekeeping.

For the past 35 years, Austria, together with the International Peace Academy, has organized annual seminars in Vienna. This year, representatives of Africa, the European Union and the United Nations discussed peace operations in Africa. In 2005, we plan to discuss peacekeeping partnerships in Africa, with special emphasis on cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations. We are convinced that those seminars will continue to make a useful contribution to improving inter-organizational cooperation, and we intend to keep the focus of the seminar on Africa.

I should like to make a few remarks on the cooperation of the United Nations with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), the Council of Europe and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Let me turn first to the OSCE. Next year will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. We are proud to host the OSCE, the only inclusive, multidimensional forum for comprehensive political and security dialogue which brings together 55 States, from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

Today's threats to security and stability are of such a complex and diverse nature that no single institution or country is able to combat them effectively alone. The OSCE and the United Nations have always been close partners in efforts to promote human rights, democracy and peace. That is particularly true of the work of both organizations in the field. The OSCE is making an important contribution as an essential part of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo, in particular for capacity- and institution-building in the field of democratization, human rights and the rule of law, as well as in the area of basic and advanced training for a multi-ethnic, community-based Kosovo Police Service.

There is also cooperation between the OSCE in Abkhazia and in South Ossetia. The role of the OSCE in elections support and monitoring, most recently in Afghanistan, and in preparing the Kosovo Assembly elections is another example.

Counter-terrorism and the fight against trafficking in human beings are priority activities of the OSCE. It works very closely with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in promoting and implementing the 12 universal terrorism-related conventions and protocols.

Secondly, turning to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, let me say that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has been one of Austria's main priorities in the field of disarmament since the Treaty was opened for signature eight years ago, in 1996. As the host country for the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO, Austria has assumed a special responsibility for the successful preparation for the entry into force of the CTBT.

Since the provisional technical secretariat of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission took up its work at the Vienna International Centre in 1997 under the leadership of Executive Secretary Wolfgang Hoffman, much progress has been achieved. The impressive number of signatures and ratifications demonstrates the growing support for that Treaty. A total of 173 States have signed, and 119 States have deposited their instruments of ratification. Unfortunately, the number of States whose ratification is required for the CTBT's entry into force stagnates at 33. We must therefore intensify our efforts to convince those countries to ratify the Treaty.

In that context, Austria welcomes the joint ministerial statement of 23 September in support of the CTBT.

Thirdly, with respect to the Council of Europe, Austria appreciates the high quality of the cooperation of the United Nations with the Council of Europe and supports the ongoing work involving the Council of Europe and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, both of which cover areas which are dealt with at the regional level by the Council of Europe. I am confident that the States Members of the United Nations and the States members of the Council of Europe will continue to support and intensify dialogue between the two organizations.

Fourthly, concerning the Inter-Parliamentary Union, two years ago Austria supported the resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the observer status of the IPU. By including the IPU in its debate, the General Assembly acknowledges the voices of the elected representatives and the fact that it will benefit from their valuable contributions and gain additional democratic legitimacy. Austria therefore welcomes the strengthening of the cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union and supports this year's draft resolution on the IPU.

Mr. Mabhongo (South Africa): My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the agenda item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations", contained in document A/59/303. We hope that this debate will help us in our joint efforts to review our achievements and also inform decisions on future cooperation.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Mr. Abubakar Tanko, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, in his capacity as current Chairperson of the African Union.

We have observed the remarkable development of the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations, which has resulted in a number of positive developments that have been important in the evolution of the African Union. We commend the developments that have taken place during the period under review. We wish in particular to note the following.

Let me turn first to the establishment of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. Since its establishment, the head of that Office has participated in a series of meetings organized by the Chairperson of the African Union, thereby contributing to the formulation of the vision and strategic framework of the African Union.

In addition, the Office has held discussions with the African Union on a project to monitor capacity-building efforts that will enable African countries to respond effectively to conflicts.

The United Nations hosted a training programme on the drafting of the Protocol relating to the

establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union together with its rules of procedure. The Peace and Security Council was officially launched in Addis Ababa in May 2004.

Commendable work has also been done in the following areas: the provision of ongoing support in the area of HIV/AIDS to the African Union; the establishment of a World Food Programme liaison office to the African Union; the operationalization of the third phase of the support provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to the Peace and Security Directorate of the African Union; and the provision of public information services to the African continent.

The United Nations has also contributed to the strengthening of the structures of the African Union. We are proud of this and of the other forms of support provided by the United Nations to our continental organization. We believe that the strengthening of the structures of the African Union will give it the capacity it needs to address the challenges facing our continent.

We are encouraged to note that more African countries are joining the African Peer Review Mechanism — a voluntary self-evaluation mechanism.

The recent launch of the Pan-African Parliament in Johannesburg, South Africa, in September 2004, heralded the dawn of a new era on the African continent. We are pleased that the first speaker of this important body is a woman. This and the allocation of 50 per cent of the commissioner posts of the African Union to women are an indication of the determination of African leaders to promote the empowerment of women.

We believe that our debate today should not only focus on our achievements, but also help us jointly to identify areas that need further improvement. In this regard, I wish to refer to the integrated socio-economic programme for the development of Africa, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Through NEPAD we hope to confront the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment in our continent. A number of important pledges to provide resources to NEPAD have been made. Unfortunately, those pledges have not yet been fulfilled. We note the role of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa in advocating in favour of NEPAD. We hope that this Office will continue to promote the provision of resources for the implementation of NEPAD programmes.

Africa is still faced with several conflict situations which hinder progress towards peace and prosperity. We believe that the Peace and Security Council of the African Union will be a useful tool to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of conflict prevention and resolution.

The African Union has demonstrated its willingness to tackle issues of conflict on the continent in support of the United Nations through the deployment of forces in new and expanding peacekeeping activities, within both the United Nations context and the regional framework. To enhance its regional framework, the African Union is also in the process of establishing its own regional African Standby Force.

In conclusion, while there is a clear demonstration of political will on the part of African leaders to confront the challenges facing our continent, the African Union still faces a shortage of financial and technical resources. We believe, therefore, that improved cooperation with the United Nations can also help in this regard.

The report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303) has appropriately reflected the progress that has been made by African subregional organizations. South Africa will continue to contribute to the strengthening of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The Summit of Heads of State and Government of SADC took a decision that the Community should apply for observer status in the United Nations. We strongly believe that this is a positive step that will further enhance the existing cooperation between the United Nations and Africa.

As stated in the report of the Secretary-General, a draft resolution sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Mauritius in its capacity as Chair of SADC has been submitted to the United Nations Secretariat. We urge all countries to support this draft resolution when it is presented for action.

Mr. Pourgourides (Cyprus): Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor on this important agenda item concerning cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations. There is an increased need to intensify this cooperation in order to address the challenges facing the international community today.

First of all, I would like to align myself with the previous speakers in expressing my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on agenda item 56.

As a member of the delegation of the Republic of Cyprus to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and Chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Rights of the Assembly, I will focus on the relationship between the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

I am pleased to note, as outlined in the Secretary-General's comprehensive report on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe, that there has been productive and fruitful cooperation between the two organizations in the period under review.

The Council of Europe and the United Nations emerged at a similar point in history and share a common set of values and goals in promoting peace and prosperity and respect for the rule of law. Cooperation between the two organizations is longstanding, dating back to the creation of the Council in 1949. The United Nations and the Council of Europe are complementary and mutually reinforcing in their endeavours to protect and strengthen democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. The two organizations both have long and noteworthy experience in promoting peace and contributing to conflict prevention, confidence-building and long-term post-conflict peacebuilding in many countries. Both organizations are particularly involved in the fight against discrimination, terrorism, racism and xenophobia and strive to promote equal opportunity and equal treatment for men and women in order to secure a better future, based on universally held values and rights.

The protection of human rights is at the forefront of the Council of Europe's work. The European Convention on Human Rights is one of the most significant and effective human rights treaties currently in force. It is mandatory for all member States of the Council of Europe, each of which has accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights.

The European Court of Human Rights provides an effective way of safeguarding the human rights of millions of European citizens. Like all the other member States of the Council of Europe, my country attaches great importance to the effective functioning of the Court, which has delivered some landmark decisions on cases concerning human rights, including decisions affecting Cyprus, such as the seminal Loizidou case.

This brings me to the crucial issue of the speedy disposal of cases before the Court, as well as the effective implementation of its decisions, matters to which I am duty-bound to refer in my capacity as chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Rights of the Council of Europe. The speedy disposal of cases and the prompt execution of the judgements of the European Court of Human Rights are essential to the credibility and effectiveness of the European Convention on Human Rights as a constitutional instrument of European public order that significantly contributes to the democratic tradition of the continent.

Smaller States, for which international legality is of utmost importance and which must rely heavily on the full implementation of the decisions of the Court for their protection, are particularly supportive of the role of the European Court of Human Rights.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is also very much interested in the reform process of the United Nations. To that end, we debated in our Assembly the report on strengthening the United Nations and adopted Parliamentary Assembly resolution 1373 of 2004, which contains important proposals for strengthening the United Nations. Our aim in the Parliamentary Assembly is to use all available means at our disposal to assist in giving a parliamentary dimension to the world Organization.

As already stated, the Council of Europe is predominantly a human rights organization. We believe that without respect for human rights, the world cannot enjoy peace and security. We in the Council of Europe, of course, share the United Nations concern for threats to international peace and security caused by terrorism, but we strongly believe that the fight against terrorism must be conducted in ways and with means that fully respect human rights and fundamental freedoms. The fight against terrorism must never be allowed to degenerate into torture and inhuman or degrading treatment, the prohibition of which is absolute.

In July 2003, Protocol No. 13 to the European Convention on Human Rights entered into force. The effect of that historic protocol is to abolish the death penalty in all circumstances. The European continent,

with one sad exception, no longer imposes the death penalty. We regard that as a great achievement. Both the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers are currently engaged in an ongoing dialogue with those observer States that retain the death penalty. In the Council of Europe, we are also actively taking steps against racism. We look forward to a continent free of racial discrimination and are also working methodically against the trafficking of human beings and for the effective protection of national minorities.

In conclusion, I am convinced that the Council of Europe and the United Nations can benefit mutually from one another's work. The overlap existing on subjects examined by the two organizations need not mean the repetition of the same work but, rather, complementarity and reinforcement in their respective fields of action. Especially with regard to promoting peace, stability and the rule of law, we believe that the already close cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations could and should be further enhanced.

Mr. Menon (Singapore): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank and commend the Secretary-General for his excellent report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations (A/59/303), and for his initiative in promoting such cooperation over the years. We would also like to welcome the biennialization of this agenda item and the consolidation of the Secretary-General's reports into a single report.

The Secretary-General's report shows how wide-ranging United Nations cooperation with regional and other organizations has been. In my own region, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), an organization comprising 10 member States, has been broadening and deepening its cooperation with the United Nations. Details of this cooperation can be found in the Secretary-General's report and in the statement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic on behalf of ASEAN, with which my delegation fully associates itself.

It is also clear from the report that the United Nations does not conduct the same cooperative activities with each regional organization. To do so would not make sense because every region has its own unique characteristics, priorities and needs, depending on its philosophy and stage of development. The cultural and political diversity of different regions brings a certain richness to the various cooperative activities with the United Nations. We are all the better because of it. It is also interesting to learn from the draft resolutions initiated by different regional organizations on this subject and the statements of various Member States that the Assembly heard today, what they value in their cooperation with the United Nations.

However, on the subject of draft resolutions, my delegation is sad to observe that in recent years, some draft resolutions on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, instead of being adopted by consensus, are voted upon. To those who do not know the background to such votes, it can create the wrong impression that some Member States are opposed to United Nations cooperation with those regional organizations, when, in reality, there is no such opposition. The United Nations as a whole and its component entities have always sought to work within their mandates.

Having said that, one would assume that those tabling the draft resolutions are proud of what their regional organizations are doing in cooperation with the United Nations. In that regard, having a vote on a draft resolution on cooperation with the United Nations is something that members of the regional organizations concerned should try to avoid. It is not difficult to achieve a consensus draft resolution. All it takes is to keep the text brief and focused on what one's regional organization values in its cooperation with the United Nations, leaving contentious and divisive issues aside, especially issues that do not enjoy an international consensus.

Why then do we keep seeing votes on some of these draft resolutions? First, my delegation has observed that some countries seem to believe that it is natural for the General Assembly to endorse, pay tribute to, acknowledge or take note of certain values, standards and practices of common cultural heritage within their regional organization of which they are particularly proud. Those countries do not seem to understand that in an organization comprising Members from all over the world, others of a different heritage do not necessarily share the same views on those values, standards and practices. Sadly, some of them would go so far as to insist on those elements, even after other countries have expressed concerns and reservations. Under those circumstances, for countries that do not agree, the only way for them to express

their reservations and concerns is to call for a vote on the draft resolution or at least on the problematic elements of the draft.

Secondly, my delegation has observed that some countries seem to rare for the occasional fight, and, thanks to their creativity every year, certain divisive issues keep coming up in various forms in draft resolutions in the Main Committees and the plenary. The unfortunate net result is to distract the Assembly's attention from the important subjects in question and to deny consensus on the relevant draft resolutions, as in the case of the drafts on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

It is the fervent hope of my delegation that wisdom will prevail and that we will all recognize, for our common good, that there is a time and a place to debate issues that are clearly divisive in a constructive manner and that we will all recognize that scoring a victory through a narrow vote on contentious issues, issues on which there is no international consensus, not only achieves nothing but generates acrimony and discredits this institution that we all profess to cherish.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/59/303), which describes cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO). We are pleased to see the ever-stronger relationship and the gradual expansion of cooperation between the two organizations.

Borne out of the spirit of the Bandung Conference, AALCO is the only intergovernmental legal consultative institution in the Asian-African region. Over the years, AALCO has closely followed the latest developments in international law, carried out in-depth studies on international law issues of common concern to its member States, provided advice on international law to its member States and provided them with a forum for cooperation on legal issues of common interest. AALCO has thus provided guidance to Asian and African States in their participation in international legal practice and has contributed to the progressive development and codification of international law. AALCO has now become a regional international organization with unique influence in the field of international law. We believe AALCO will see its influence grow further with the increase in its membership and the expansion of its activities.

Since it attained United Nations Permanent Observer status in 1980, AALCO has seen its cooperation with the Organization grow increasingly close. Several United Nations organs and other international organizations are regularly present at AALCO's annual sessions and make topical presentations. Likewise, AALCO has attended relevant meetings within the United Nations system and participates actively in the consideration of relevant items.

A quick review of its agenda reveals the priority that AALCO consistently accords legal issues and other matters of concern to the United Nations. At its forty-third annual session, held in June in Bali, Indonesia, AALCO considered such agenda items as the law of the sea, recent developments related to the International Criminal Court, an international anti-corruption legal instrument, jurisdictional immunities of States and their property, the World Trade Organization as a framework agreement and code of conduct for world trade, and cooperation aimed at combating the trafficking of women and children. The session strengthened understanding in the area of cooperation among its member States on those agenda items.

The cooperation between AALCO and the International Law Commission is particularly noteworthy. Regular attendance by AALCO and the Commission at each other's annual or regular sessions, the presentation of reports on the progress of their respective work and exchanges of views have helped Asian and African States keep abreast of the most recent developments in international legislation and have enabled them to make their own contributions to the progressive development and codification of international law.

As a member of both the United Nations and AALCO, China is pleased to see the constantly expanding cooperation between those two organizations. It is our hope that cooperation between AALCO and the United Nations aimed at promoting the progressive development and codification of international law and in other areas of common concern will be further strengthened and that it will become a model for closer cooperation among global and regional organizations aimed at further promoting world peace and development. The Chinese Government will, as always, continue to help to enhance AALCO's role, increase its impact and promote closer cooperation between it and the United Nations.

Mr. Laoteggueinodji (Chad) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is always greatly pleased and justly proud to see Mr. Jean Ping, a noble son of Central Africa, presiding over the work of the General Assembly. For more than three years, my delegation has observed that each time issues concerning Central Africa have been considered — whether it be in the General Assembly, in the Security Council or even in the Economic and Social Council — a son of Central Africa has always presided over the debate. Again this year, we have not broken with tradition, since here Mr. Ping is at the helm of the General Assembly, and for an entire year of leadership. In the view of my delegation, those are positive signals that destiny is sending to the countries and peoples of Central Africa, brought together in the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), so that they can be heard and so that bilateral partners and the international community will support them in their development efforts.

That is why, in expressing my delegation's support for the statements made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Union and by the representative of the Congo on behalf of the member States of ECCAS, I should like to say that, yes, the States of Central Africa have certainly been heard, judging by the complexity and depth of the Secretary-General's report before us with regard to cooperation between the United Nations and ECCAS.

The report, whether it is addressing the continental organization — the African Union — itself or ECCAS — one of the Union's subregional pillars — highlights all the salient characteristics of cooperation between those two African institutions, emphasizing the concrete achievements resulting from that dynamic cooperation. In that regard, my delegation sincerely congratulates the Secretary-General on his significant, comprehensive report.

All of the Organization's efforts in the past three years to benefit Central African countries culminated with the sending in 2003, at the initiative of the Security Council, of an interdisciplinary fact-finding mission of the Department of Political Affairs to the 11 ECCAS member countries. One of the mission's conclusions and recommendations that my delegation would like to emphasize is the proposal to appoint a special envoy of the Secretary-General for Central Africa.

Although the interim report of the assessment mission (S/2003/1077) was considered in a public meeting of the Security Council — the 4871st meeting — on 24 November 2003, my delegation would like to reiterate that we hope the appointment of a special envoy would be only an intermediate step. In fact, the mission recommendation with respect to a special envoy could eventually lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, integrated and lasting strategy in which subregional and United Nations organs operating in Central Africa would work together on all political, economic and humanitarian issues affecting all the States of the subregion. From that perspective, the opening of a United Nations office in Central Africa to efficiently coordinate all issues related to the development and consolidation of peace in Central Africa would be welcome. In the light of my country's experience in conflict settlement in Central Africa and its geo-strategic situation in the subregion, Chad's authorities have authorized me to express their readiness to welcome and host a United Nations office in Central Africa should such a noble and useful project see the light of day in the months or years to come.

I used the phrase "consolidation of peace" because we find that nearly all of Central Africa's hotspots of conflict either have been or are in the process of being extinguished, one after another. Therefore, we have reasons for hope. The eventual adoption by consensus of the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and ECCAS — of which my country is a sponsor — would likely strengthen the benefits of such cooperation.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes to see all the States members of ECCAS, without exception, participate actively in the preparations for holding and following up the forthcoming international conference on the Great Lakes region.

Mr. Kaludjerovic (Serbia and Montenegro): It is with pleasure that I take this opportunity to address two specific issues on our agenda: cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

The issues on the agendas of those organizations are closely connected; that is why cooperation between them is of vital importance. The same goes for their cooperation with the United Nations aimed at facilitating the resolution of some of the problems that we are facing in today's Europe — even more so, because the maintenance of international peace and

security requires a multidisciplinary approach with the participation and active contribution of a large number of international institutions.

At this point, I would like to emphasize the very useful cooperation established among the three organizations in my country, especially among the United Nations, OSCE and Council of Europe offices in Belgrade, Podgorica and Pristina.

As a partner with the Government of Serbia and Montenegro, the OSCE has been actively involved in the reform of election systems, the judiciary and the police, and in the strengthening of institutions, particularly the role of Parliament, the rule of law and law enforcement. In southern Serbia, the OSCE mission played a key role in containing potential ethnic conflicts by creating conditions for the peaceful development of that part of Serbia. Moreover, OSCE has been a promoter of regional activities in border management, in line with the decisions of the Ohrid Conference on Balkan Border Security.

As stated in the Secretary-General's report, there is a special form of cooperation between the United Nations and OSCE and other regional organizations in our province of Kosovo and Metohija. Through the Pillar system of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the OSCE has been particularly involved in institution-building, the promotion of human rights, police training, media and elections. We are fully confident that the further promotion of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, as well as OSCE offices on the ground, will contribute to better minority protection, the faster return of refugees and internally displaced persons and establishment of the fate of missing persons.

As regards the United Nations and Council of Europe, we are convinced that the further advancement of their already extensive cooperation will help avoid overlapping of activities and enable the more efficient use of resources and knowledge, thus making it possible to address even more of the needs of the countries in which they operate.

Joint United Nations and Council of Europe activities in the field of the restoration and protection of cultural heritage in Kosovo and Metohija are of immense importance to my country, especially in the context of the work of the Independent International Commission for Cultural Heritage in Kosovo, jointly set up by the Council of Europe, the European Commission and UNMIK after the March violence in Kosovo and Metohija. We expect that that cooperation will further benefit from the active participation of those organizations at the forthcoming international donors conference for the restoration of destroyed cultural monuments in Kosovo and Metohija, to be held under UNESCO auspices at the very beginning of next year.

I would like to take this opportunity to underline the importance of the efforts of the Council of Europe concerning decentralization in Kosovo and Metohija, which in many of its aspects converges with the plan of the Republic of Serbia.

Here let me touch on some activities that in our view merit particular attention and the need for a common approach. First is the area of the fight against organized crime and border management. The United Nations and the OSCE held a joint conference devoted to those issues in Vienna this year to promote cooperation and assess the needs of countries in order to strengthen their capacities in those areas.

Next, there is ample room to strengthen existing cooperation in the fight against terrorism by clearly dividing the roles among organizations and making the best use of their complementary advantages. In the first half of 2004, a joint United Nations-OSCE conference devoted to the fight against terrorism was held in Vienna. Indeed, on the OSCE Permanent Council's agenda for today is the fight against terrorism and cooperation between United Nations and OSCE in that regard.

The field of environmental protection is a particularly promising area for United Nations-OSCE cooperation, as United Nations experience can be used to strengthen existing OSCE mechanisms in that field. In that context, a memorandum of understanding between the OSCE, the United Nations and the Economic Commission for Europe is currently being worked out in order to provide a legal framework for future joint activities.

Of no less importance is the expansion of cooperation between the Council of Europe and the specialized agencies of the United Nations, particularly those dealing with issues similar to those considered by the Council of Europe, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNESCO and the Office of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Human Rights. In 2003, at the initiative of my country, it was agreed that the UNHCR representative participate in the meetings of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and its working bodies when issues of importance to both organizations were discussed — such as refugees and internally displaced persons — with a view to stepping up cooperation between the two bodies and avoiding overlap.

In view of the fact that the activities of the United Nations, the OSCE and the Council of Europe converge and complement each other in many respects, we are confident that by strengthening the existing cooperation they could provide additional assistance not only to my country but to the region of South-Eastern Europe as a whole.

Mr. Amayom (Kenya): Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to make a brief intervention on cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union (AU), as well as on cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO).

Regional and other organizations have undoubtedly become pillars of development. They have contributed on all multisectorial issues, including the promotion and preservation of international peace, stability and security, and sustainable development. Consequently, those organizations have gained recognition for the work they have done and for the role they have played in complementing the functions of the United Nations. My delegation therefore aligns itself with the statement made by the delegation of Indonesia when introducing draft resolution A/59/L.1, on cooperation between the United Nations and AALCO.

Kenya believes that cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations is important and needs to be encouraged. We hold the view that the challenging issues facing the world can best be addressed collectively. My delegation appreciates the enormous achievement realized from the continued cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations as indicated in the report of the Secretary General contained in document A/59/303.

The African Union has been actively involved in the fields of capacity-building, promotion of peace in conflict areas and sustainable development and has also collaborated with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on those issues. The two organizations have also cooperated in peacekeeping, protection and promotion of human rights, conflict management, health and poverty eradication, as well as children's issues. In that regard, we would like to note our appreciation for the assistance provided by the United Nations in peacekeeping and crisis management on the continent of Africa.

As a regular troop-contributing country, we welcome the decision by the AU to establish a standby force. That is in line with the Brahimi report (A/55/305), which called for complementing United Nations efforts with regional peacekeeping forces. My delegation looks forward to the Secretary-General's report on implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations to enhance African peacekeeping capability. We call on the international community to assist the AU to realize the establishment of that desired force. My delegation also welcomes the establishment of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, which will undoubtedly strengthen cooperation between the two organizations.

We welcome the overwhelming support accorded to the New Partnership for Africa's Development initiative by the United Nations and the international community. We take the view that the successful implementation of its objectives, as well as the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals, are contingent on the support that will be accorded by our development partners. The HIV/AIDS pandemic and other debilitating diseases, as well as endemic poverty and unfair trade practices, continue to militate against sustainable development.

We note with satisfaction, however, the continuing efforts of AALCO towards strengthening the role of the United Nations and its various organs in the areas of combating corruption, international terrorism and drug trafficking, as well as human rights issues. It is also working to enhance the rule of law, to ensure wider adherence to related international instruments and to promote the objectives and principles set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

In view of the important role played by AALCO, we support initiatives to expand and enhance its cooperation with the United Nations and welcome draft resolution A/59/L.1, introduced this morning by the Ambassador of Indonesia.

My delegation would also like to extend its appreciation to the Government of Indonesia for successfully hosting the forty-third session of AALCO in June 2003. Kenya has been honoured with the task of taking up the chairmanship of AALCO for the period 2005-2006. We shall endeavour to ensure greater cooperation between AALCO and the United Nations. Consequently, Kenya will be hosting AALCO's forty-fourth session in Nairobi in June 2005, at a time when the organization will be observing its fiftieth anniversary. My delegation takes this opportunity to invite all member States to Nairobi for the forty-fourth session.

In conclusion, Kenya remains supportive of the Secretary-General; we must pool resources with a view to fostering fruitful cooperation in the search for long-term solutions to global challenges.

Mr. Grigore (Republic of Moldova): My delegation endorses the statement made by the delegation of Ukraine on behalf of the States members of the GUUAM group — Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova. We would like to address several additional points that are of particular interest to my country.

I would like to join other delegations in thanking the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations (A/59/303). It provides a clear and meaningful overview, and forms an excellent basis for our debate today. My delegation supports the approach taken to conduct a single joint debate on all the agenda items concerning cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations. It allows us to make a general assessment of best practices with a view to ensuring complementarity between the efforts of the United Nations and regional and other organizations in tackling the most important issues on the global agenda, as well as to deciding on the way forward for enhanced cooperation.

We believe that the debates in the General Assembly on this issue should not only address the technical issues of interaction between the United Nations and various regional and other organizations, but also allow for scrutiny of the results of their common efforts, because only progress made towards accomplishing shared goals can be considered a measure of the effectiveness of their cooperation.

My delegation welcomes the efficient collaboration between the Secretariat, as well as United Nations bodies and agencies, and the Council of Europe, which remains the leading regional organization in promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Republic of Moldova, as the country that held the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in the second half of 2003, is well aware of the value of this cooperation. We also acknowledge, as does the report, the contribution of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to achieving the major goals and objectives of the international community, and are looking forward to the Second Conference of Speakers of Parliaments in 2005.

As an active member of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC), the Republic of Moldova appreciates the initiation of joint programmes pertaining to fields of common interest for both the United Nations and BSEC. We value the improved cooperation, including in the area of peace and security on the African continent, between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie, of which Moldova is a member.

I would like to single out the issue of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which is of the utmost importance for my country. The United Nations and the OSCE have shared interests on the European continent — to strengthen the rule of law and democracy and to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as to contribute to conflict prevention and post-conflict peacebuilding.

Although very concise on this issue because of its new format, the report takes stock of the important efforts that both organizations have made to improve their interaction, at the level of secretariats, as well as among their missions in the field, as is the case in Kosovo and Georgia. Some significant steps have also been taken within the framework of the tripartite process of informal consultations among the United Nations, the OSCE and the Council of Europe with a view to enhancing cooperation in areas such as combating terrorist acts and human trafficking, curbing organized crime and corruption and fostering economic and environmental cooperation. There is good interaction between the OSCE and the Economic Commission for Europe, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Office of the

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme.

With its unique and comprehensive approach to security, stressing human rights, as well as political military issues, the OSCE remains the primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in the region. This aspect, however, is reflected less in the report, probably because the cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE on the issue of conflicts that are not dealt with by the Security Council is only sporadic.

There are, however, many unresolved issues on the OSCE security agenda that deserve close attention from the United Nations. One of those issues is the continued existence of so-called frozen conflicts in the Black Sea-South Caucasus region — in Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Those conflicts have far-reaching implications for international peace and security, regional stability and development. Despite OSCE efforts, international mediation has not been successful in resolving those conflicts. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office acknowledged the threat posed by the frozen conflicts during his briefing to the Security Council in May 2004, and appealed to Council members to contribute to their resolution.

As my delegation has pointed out during previous sessions, United Nations bodies and agencies and the OSCE could and should discover new areas of cooperation to facilitate the settlement of frozen conflicts. All the capabilities of both organizations must be used to that end; they must not be hindered by concerns about the so-called division of labour.

It is increasingly evident that we must urgently step up joint efforts to deal with the political conflict in the eastern part of my country. The Republic of Moldova has systematically informed the relevant international organizations of the danger posed by this protracted conflict and of our efforts to resolve it. Over the years, the Republic of Moldova has worked in good faith with all the actors involved in the settlement process. While working in a spirit of compromise, the Moldovan authorities have firmly maintained that any settlement proposal or solution to the political conflict must be based on the respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. Despite the constructive approach of the Moldovan authorities in their dialogue with the self-appointed Transdniestrian leaders and with other participants in the multilateral negotiating framework, the lack of tangible results after 12 years of negotiations has demonstrated the inefficiency of the existing regional settlement mechanism.

Also, it has become clear that the self-proclaimed Transdniestrian authorities do not sincerely desire the country's reintegration. Backed by influential foreign actors, the separatist leaders have manipulated the negotiating process towards other ends than those set initially. The failure to end the process of the withdrawal of foreign troops, munitions and armaments, as stipulated in the 1999 Istanbul OSCE Summit documents, has also not facilitated the complete settlement of this political conflict.

The overall situation in the region has significantly worsened, especially in 2004, when separatist paramilitaries continuously attempted to consolidate their presence in some portions of the security zone and to take control of a number of villages, railways stations and other property currently under the jurisdiction of the constitutional authorities. The separatist regime systematically violates most human rights, even children's right to education. This region remains an area of illegal production and trafficking of arms that are likely to reach other conflict zones, a lawless territory of smuggling and ultimately a threat to regional security and stability. This is why the Republic of Moldova calls for a more active and result-oriented involvement on the part of the United Nations and European regional organizations, in particular the OSCE and the European Union.

We believe that it is essential to deploy an international monitoring mission under the auspices of the OSCE and EU along the porous Transdniestrian segment of the eastern border of Moldova with a view to curbing the illegal activities of the separatist regime. We deem it necessary to modify the components of the existing peacekeeping mechanism, which is lacking in effectiveness and impartiality, and to replace it with a new one under a clear international mandate.

The Republic of Moldova is strongly committed to solving this political conflict peacefully, on the basis of the respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. By launching an initiative for a stability and security pact for Moldova, President Vladimir Voronin invited all concerned parties to reach consensus in order to guarantee the independence, sovereignty and integrity of a democratic Moldovan

State, embarked upon the path to European integration. Holding an international conference on this issue could provide useful insights on the measures to follow.

My delegation also believes that both the United Nations and the OSCE should insist on ensuring strict and full implementation of their resolutions and decisions with relevance to the conflict situations. Noting with concern the halt in the withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territory of Moldova in 2004, we would like to emphasize once again the urgency of completing this process in accordance with the 1999 OSCE Summit decisions, which the General Assembly specifically upheld by adopting the relevant provisions in its resolutions of 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 on cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE.

Finally, my delegation looks forward to the adoption at the current session of a meaningful and substantive resolution on the cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE that would candidly assess the situation on the ground and contribute to solving the difficult problems existing in the OSCE region.

The Acting President: In view of the long list of speakers still inscribed on my list, we will prolong this evening's meeting until 6.30 p.m.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Ukraine on behalf of the Georgia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Republic of Moldova Group (GUUAM) on the agenda item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations". I would like to take this opportunity to present our national perspective on the item under consideration, and in particular on sub-items (d), (f), (n) and (p).

On sub-item (n), the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), we took note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303), which is, regrettably, more statistical than analytical or thought-provoking. We were surprised that, even in the reported enumeration of the joint activities of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), we failed to find any reference to the cooperation between the two organizations in the field of the maintenance of international peace and security, except for counter-terrorism measures. The logical question is the following: is there any cooperation, or at least interaction, between the United Nations and the OSCE, as defined by Article 52 of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter on regional arrangements with the main purpose of "dealing with such matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security"? If yes, then why is the authority to deal with evident threats to the peace and security of its Member States, entrusted to the OSCE by the General Assembly, not covered in the report as a matter of priority?

It is also worrisome that both organizations, in their cooperation, pay inadequate attention to existing threats to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their member States. Having studied the report and other relevant documents for the past several years, Azerbaijan has not noticed any serious consideration or assessment of the settlement processes of the armed conflicts existing in the OSCE area, or, at least, none in the consultations held on a regular basis at all levels between the United Nations and the OSCE.

Here, I wish to express a note of caution. The United Nations and the OSCE are the only international organizations that are responsible for maintaining peace and security in Azerbaijan. Therefore, we are justified in expecting the OSCE to fulfil its mandate and in expecting the United Nations Security Council to utilize this regional arrangement for implementing Council resolutions upholding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of this United Nations Member State. For that reason, it is incumbent on both organizations to respond to the appeals of their member States and effectively counter the threats to these States' security.

Nevertheless, it is encouraging to see the range of activities specified in the report. They are diverse and vary from putting an end to the trafficking of human beings to fighting corruption. Azerbaijan would like to request that this list of activities be substantially amended through analyses of and reports on the achievements and, perhaps, failures of the negotiation processes seeking to resolve conflicts in the OSCE area, in particular of those processes based on Security Council resolutions. The consequences and implications of the conflicts for the peace and development of the affected countries are devastating and merit serious consideration and appropriate cooperative actions by both organizations.

Another important sphere of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE concerns the humanitarian dimension. Unfortunately, while this sort of activity is ongoing in the field, the report does not mention it at all.

Azerbaijan also believes that the transition from relief to development could represent a truly practical opportunity for coordinating the activities of the United Nations and the OSCE, given the latter's experience in stabilization and post-conflict rehabilitation in the Balkans.

We are pleased to see noted in the report that the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) enjoys a close working relationship with OSCE in the economic and environmental areas. Azerbaijan hopes that that relationship will result in target-oriented projects to be implemented on the ground.

Turning to sub-item (d), cooperation of the United Nations with the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) offers great opportunities for fostering growth and promoting sustainable development. The role and potential of that organization should be reviewed in light of the ongoing development in the region, including the enlargement of the European Union. We note with satisfaction the positive trends in BSEC development. In our view, extended inter-agency dialogue, partnerships with all stakeholders and financial support will have a direct impact on BSEC institutional capacities and make it more responsive to the needs of the region, which members are looking forward to.

We recognize the vital role inter-agency dialogue and collaboration plays in effective and timely implementation of the development agenda of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization. In that specific context, we would like to underline the role of the United Nations. We appreciate the strengthening of collaborative arrangements between BSEC and United Nations system organizations and fully concur with the recommendation of the Secretary-General to continue that cooperation in fields of common interest and his call on the specialized agencies to formulate and implement joint programmes.

The further contribution of the United Nations and the ECE to the work of BSEC in the field of transportation is crucial. In the meantime, we look forward to the expansion of cooperation between ECE and BSEC to include the areas of trade facilitation and sustainable energy. We would also like to highlight the progress in cooperation between BSEC and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, which we believe is making a good contribution to the sustainable development of agriculture in the region and, ultimately, to strengthening the capacities of BSEC member States in achieving their common objective of eradicating hunger and poverty. The dialogue between BSEC and the World Bank and the World Trade Organization should also be further promoted.

Azerbaijan places special emphasis on cooperation with BSEC. During our two consecutive chairmanships of BSEC, we pursued a priority-based approach and contributed to translating that approach into operative targets. Based on the resources available and existing comparative advantages, we identified the strengthening of inter-State cooperation in the fields of energy and development of transport networks as priorities. We fully welcome, therefore, the adoption and further implementation of the Baku Declaration on energy and cooperation. For our part, we are resolved to further contribute to energy supply security and development of oil and gas pipeline networks, including through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, on which we have recently witnessed substantive progress.

The delegation of Azerbaijan would like to extend its support to the draft resolution to be submitted under this agenda sub-item and invites Member States to consider co-sponsoring it.

Turning to sub-item (p), on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Azerbaijan believes that the determination of the United Nations and OIC to further strengthen existing cooperation, by developing specific proposals in designated priority areas is crucial. In that regard, we welcome the information contained in the Secretary-General's report, in particular concerning the meeting held in Vienna from 13 to 15 July 2004, which evaluated the existing United Nations-OIC cooperation mechanisms and produced a number of proposals to enhance that cooperation. In order to deepen the relations between the two organizations and in view of the scope of the regions affected by conflicts, we are convinced that the two organizations should cooperate more closely in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

On sub-item (f), regarding cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe, my

country highly appreciates the continued practice of direct contacts between the United Nations and the Council of Europe, carried out by the secretariats and specialized agencies of both organizations. Both organizations pursue the same aims and ideals, namely, to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations and to achieve cooperation in solving international problems, as enshrined the Charter of the United Nations. Expressing our support for the draft resolution on this topic, we believe that the United Nations and the Council of Europe could cooperate more actively in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict peace-building, each of them through their own instruments. By doing so they would complement each other's activities.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/32 of 19 November 2002, I now call on Mr. Sergio Páez, President of the Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Mr. Páez (Inter-Parliamentary Union) (*spoke in Spanish*): For many years, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has been engaged in developing a wide-ranging programme of cooperation with the United Nations and support for its agenda. We believe that that is a natural evolution for two organizations that pursue the same objectives, albeit from their respective institutional standpoints and interests.

Two years ago, in recognition of its standing as the world organization of national parliaments, the Assembly granted observer status to the IPU. Since that time, the relations between the two organizations have taken on new impetus and significance, and it is our intention to continue to build on those foundations in the future.

This is a time when the United Nations is seeking to reinforce its links with the legislative branches of Government. It is not alone is seeking to do so. In fact, it is a sign of the times. Many multilateral organizations are turning to publicly elected representatives in the hope of narrowing the gap between peoples' hopes and the requirements of effective global governance.

I will not dwell here on the subject of the recent report published by the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations, known as the Cardoso Panel (A/58/817 and Corr.1). The matter has already been addressed in the General Assembly debate. What is more, the report is essentially about civil society, a category to which the world's legislatures do not belong. I would, however, like to set out my vision of what cooperation between the United Nations and IPU is, and what it is destined to become.

In 2000, IPU mobilized the leaders of the world's parliaments for a ground-breaking conference that took place in this Assembly Hall on the eve of the Millennium Summit. The declaration that emanated from that historic gathering stressed the wish of the world's parliaments to contribute to international cooperation, with the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union at the core of their efforts, and that point was acknowledged by the world's heads of State and Government.

As we approach the fifth anniversary of the Millennium, IPU is preparing once again to mobilize speakers and presiding officers of parliaments for the second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments, to be held here in New York in September 2005. I need not tell you that the year 2005 will be an important one in the history of this world Organization. The United Nations will be celebrating its sixtieth anniversary and carrying out its first five-year review of the Millennium Declaration. It will thus be a time when the Organization will be gauging its own progress on reform, which has become a matter of increasing urgency for its membership.

In that context, it is important that parliamentarians help to bring about change and play a more dynamic and decisive role in all fields of international cooperation, in addition to supporting a multilateralism that is more effective and comprehensive. In that context, the second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments, to be held in 2005, will be of singular importance.

In the effort to assist the United Nations to achieve its goals, make its case and meet its challenges, parliamentary bodies constitute a rich resource and an invaluable institutional support. The success achieved to date in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals already owes much to them. That is why we believe that the report that we will be presenting on the structure and functioning of parliamentary mechanisms in the context of multilateral cooperation will be both timely and valuable for the international system.

Against the backdrop of those broader questions, it should not be forgotten that the IPU is an action-oriented organization — one that is constantly aware of people's day-to-day needs. Indeed, the IPU is involved whenever major political nation-building initiatives are under way and whenever the United Nations is hard at work helping countries emerge from conflict. That was the case, for example, in Timor-Leste, where we worked hard to help establish the new Legislative Assembly. An IPU needs-assessment mission will be in Afghanistan assisting in a programme aimed at the consolidation of the new Parliament in Kabul. Yet another mission will be in Amman, working with Iraq's Interim Assembly in preparing the ground for the Constitutional Assembly that will, God willing, be elected at the beginning of next year.

Drawing on this extensive practical experience and on the efforts made by the IPU over the years to develop the normative aspects of democracy, we are also working on a systematic framework of democracy indicators within countries. The framework thus created will identify legitimate representation mechanisms and the institutional practices of parliaments that allow them to operate as effective legislative and oversight institutions.

Over the past two days, the Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, which traditionally brings together the members of Parliament present in the General Assembly, has been debating the theme of disarmament, lasting peace and post-conflict reconstruction.

Speakers of Parliaments, legislators from all over the world, high-level officials from the United Nations and eminent experts representing a broad range of political thought held a rich and active exchange of views.

Through this multiplicity of activities, as set forth in the Secretary-General's report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, as well as others to which I referred earlier, the IPU is bringing the parliaments to the United Nations, and the United Nations to the parliaments. Throughout we have maintained that this is a two-way relationship. One the one hand, the IPU mobilizes those parliamentarians with practical expertise in dealing with specific issues and helps them interact with each other and with relevant United Nations bodies. On the other, the United Nations takes steps to improve understanding and knowledge of its aims and objectives, thereby enabling parliamentarians to serve as its political arm.

I feel in duty bound to take this opportunity to reiterate the IPU's commitment systematically and with the necessary political resolve to work every day to strengthen peace processes the world over, promoting formal education in support of lasting peace and taking initiatives to ensure peaceful coexistence at the local and global levels.

Collective security is today a specific moral imperative and a pressing need on the part of our peoples, to which we must respond quickly and effectively. This solid and tangible commitment to peace and collective security will be a key priority for the world's parliaments, in keeping with their humanistic principles and their fundamental values and with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.